

# **Patient account of failings at Eye Pavilion**

**A patient at the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion, has come forward to offer their account of the failings in the existing hospital building.**

Peter Scobie has attended the Eye Pavilion for 18 years, after being diagnosed with Lebers hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON).

He lost his sight just before the pandemic and has been blind for four years.

Peter has revealed that there is an absence of specialists in the hospital. He said that his specialist is a paediatric doctor from the sick kids, who only comes to the Pavilion on Tuesdays.

A further issue with the hospital comes down to geographic issues, as Peter has previously been sent to Newcastle for an appointment while the closest specialist is even further south in Cambridge.

He has also highlighted the situation of those needing sight loss assessments who must go to the most inaccessible part of the building to receive the check.

Campaigners for a new Eye Pavilion, based at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh were disappointed when The Scottish Government made no mention of the project in the budget late last year.

This is despite Health Secretary Michael Matheson telling campaigners that a decision would be made around the budget.

Health boards then discovered that there would be a two-year freeze on all capital spending and projects.

They are also required to make 6.8% savings.

If this stays in place, there is little chance that the Eye Pavilion will be built in the near future.

This will force Peter, and other patients like him, to rely on services that the NHS themselves deemed not fit for purpose 10 years ago.

Sarah Boyack MSP said: "Peter has helped to highlight the unacceptable condition of the current Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion.

"Patients should have facilities that support them through their difficulties, not hinder them further.

"Eye Pavilion staff do their best but without a new building and facilities they have one hand tied behind their back.

"The Scottish Government needs to listen to patients like Peter and realise that maintaining the current building is bad for patients, bad for NHS Lothian, and bad for Edinburgh."

A spokesperson for Sight Scotland said: "In Peter's case, an absence of specialist doctors that are trained in his condition means it is difficult for him to get the correct treatment he needs.

"With the closest specialist for his condition based in Cambridge, a new eye hospital could be an opportunity to provide a training ground for ophthalmologists.

"The hospital's inaccessible layout means that Peter and many others seeking essential services, such as collecting

prescriptions and visiting patient support on the top floor, struggle to do so.

“More needs to be done to ensure accessible access to quality eye healthcare.”



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